

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 280930Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4708
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3649

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE PINS PINT
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: ISRAEL AS PROTECTOR OF THE CHRISTIANS

1. KHALIL HADDAD OF PRESIDENTIAL CABINET HAS CALLED TO MY ATTENTION WIRE SERVICE REPORT OF REMARKABLE STATEMENT ABOUT LEBANESE CHRISTIANS MADE BY PRIME MINISTER BEGIN DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE UN. BEGIN QUOTE. THE CHRISTIAN VILLAGES COULD BE SEEN TO BE AN ISLAND SURROUNDED BY AN OCEAN OF MOSLEMS. THE SO-CALLED PLO SHOWERED CANNONS AND ARTILLERY ON THE 50,000 CHRISTIANS DAILY. IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR ISRAEL'S HELP THE CHRISTIANS WOULD HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT. NOBODY ELSE WAS HELPING THEM. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD THE SECRETARY GENERAL THAT ISRAEL (HAD?) EXPECTED THE CHRISTIAN WORLD TO DEFEND THIS OUTNUMBERED CHRISTIAN MINORITY. "WE WILL GO ON DEFENDING THIS MINORITY," HE SAID BECAUSE THE ISRAELIS KNEW WHAT IT WAS TO BE A MINORITY. HE SAID HE APPEALED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL, TO THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC OPINION AND TO WORLD PUBLIC OPINION TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT ASSISTING THE 50,000 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO WERE SURROUNDED BY 250,000
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MOSLEMS WHO SOUGHT TO DESTROY THEM. END QUOTE.

2. THERE WERE ONCE SOME 60,000 CHRISTIANS LIVING SOUTH OF THE LITANI AT PEACE WITH THEIR MORE NUMEROUS SHIA MOSLEM NEIGHBORS (PERHAPS 270,000). THEY WERE NOT THREATENED WITH ENGULFMENT BY THE SHIA, BUT THEY ARE THREATENED TODAY BY THE PRESENCE OF ARMED PALESTINIANS,

WHO PERHAPS NUMBER AS MANY AS 20,000 SOUTH OF THE LITANI.

3. MR. BEGIN DOES LITTLE CREDIT TO HIMSELF BY WAVING A CONFESSIONAL BLOODY SHIRT AND APPEALING TO OUR PREJUDICES IN THIS FASHION. THE CONFLICT IS NOT CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM. IT IS CHRISTIAN-PALESTINIAN, AND THE PRINCIPAL RESULT OF ISRAELI SUPPORT TO THE CHRISTIANS HAS UNFORTUNATELY BEEN TO EXACERBATE TENSIONS RATHER THAN TO IMPROVE THEIR LOT. MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE HAD TO FLEE AS A RESULT. THIS IS PERHAPS THE PRICE ONE MUST PAY FOR RESISTING, BUT ONE WONDERS HOW THE PEOPLE CONCERNED, AS OPPOSED TO THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS, FEEL ABOUT IT.

4. IF THESE ARE THE WORDS OF A RESPONSIBLE ISRAELI LEADER, IT DOES NOT AUGUR WELL FOR PEACE PROSPECTS.
PARKER

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